

Outline of Jansen's Doctrinal Discipline with Members of the Church

- I. What do Scripture, the Confessions and the Church Order say?**
 - a. Doctrinal error is sin.¹
 - b. The congregation of Christ must always be strictly admonished to be watchful.²
 - c. Everyone who privately sins against the purity of doctrine must be admonished privately.³
 - d. In cases where brotherly admonitions about private doctrinal error remain fruitless, and in cases where there is public doctrinal error, the consistory must undertake official admonition and discipline.⁴
 - e. The consistory must begin its investigation by looking at whether it is dealing with a hardened or a teachable brother.⁵
 - f. Less serious errors can be tolerated under three conditions.
 - i. That the error does not deviate from the fundamentals⁶
 - ii. That the one erring is willing to be taught⁷
 - iii. That they moreover promise not to promote their deviating sentiments⁸
 - g. With members who persist in doctrinal error worthy of discipline, the church must apply ecclesiastical censure according to Church Order of Dort articles 76 and 77 (CanRC Church Order article 68).⁹
- II. What does history teach us?**
 - a. Immediately after the sixteenth-century Reformation this type of discipline was needed and applied. Examples:
 - i. Casparus Barlaeus
 - ii. Petrus Bertius
 - iii. Gerardus Vossius
 - b. Following the Synod of Dort 1618-19, the Particular Synod of Leiden 1619 adopted rules to promote the active exercise of this type of discipline.
 - i. Concerning members who held Remonstrant beliefs and who were serving as office bearers:

¹ Deut. 13:3-5, Jer. 14:14, Matt. 7:15, Matt. 24:4,5,11, Deut. 13:6ff., Deut. 17:2ff., 1 Cor. 15:12, Gal. 1:8,9, Titus 3:10, 1 John 2:22-23, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 9-10. BC 30, HC QA 82, HC QA 85, CO of Dort article 72 (= CanRC CO article 66).

² Matt. 7:15, Matt. 24:4-5, Rom. 16:17-18, 1 Tim. 4:1, 1 John 2:19, 2 Tim. 3:1-7, 1 Tim. 1:3-4, 1 Tim. 6:3-6, Titus 3:9, 2 John 10-11.

³ Matt. 18:15, Lev. 19:17, Prov. 10:12, 1 Cor. 13:7, James 5:19-20, 1 Pet. 4:8, Matt. 18:15, Gal. 6:1. CO of Dort article 72 (= CanRC CO article 66), CO of Dort article 73 (= CanRC CO article 67).

⁴ Matt. 18:17, Matt. 16:18. HC QA 85, Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, CO of Dort article 74 (= CanRC CO article 67).

⁵ Matt. 18:15-17, Jude 22-23, Gal. 6:1, 2 Tim. 4:2, Phil. 3:15, Heb. 5:2, 1 Cor. 2:6, 1 Cor. 3:2, Heb. 5:12, 1 Pet. 2:2, 1 John 2:20,27, 1 Tim. 3:6, 1 Cor. 12:30-31, Rom. 12:4-6.

⁶ Rom. 14, Rom. 16:17-18, Gal. 1:6-7, Gal. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:12-18, 1 Tim. 1:20, 2 Tim. 2:17-18, Titus 3:10, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 10, 2 Tim. 2:5, 2 Tim. 2:8. HC QA 85.

⁷ Titus 1:9, Titus 2:9, 2 Tim. 2:24-26.

⁸ 1 Tim. 1:3-4, 1 Tim. 3:15.

⁹ Matt. 8:26, Matt. 18:1-14, Mark 9:34-37, Luke 9:54-55, Mark 8:22, John 20:27, Gal. 2:11-14, Acts 5:1-13, 1 Cor. 5, Matt. 18:17, 1 Cor. 5:13, Titus 3:10.

1. Hardened members, who had been elders or deacons of the Remonstrant persuasion, and persisted in their opinion, these the synod judged that they should be deposed, but no excommunication should be applied. Instead, they would be observed for a year, and the following particular synod would judge what should be done with them for the best interest of the churches.
2. Teachable members who sought to be reconciled to the churches were to be judged in good standing, if they made a confession of guilt before the consistory. In some cases, it was decided that the best interests of the churches would be served with a public confession of guilt.
- ii. Concerning members who held Remonstrant beliefs but had not served as office bearers:
 1. Hardened members should be diligently admonished by their respective consistories to give up their sentiments. Further proceedings against them would be deferred for a decision at the following particular synod.
 2. Then there are those who, out of simple-mindedness, misunderstanding, or weakness, cannot understand or agree with the doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning one article or another of the five various points, or has not fully rejected the sentiments of the Remonstrants. If these members are teachable and have begun to be taught, and if they are not fixed in their position, they will be allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper. However, they must promise to keep silent while they are being taught and they must immediately declare that they hold the Reformed doctrine to be the right and complete doctrine of salvation, with which they, by the grace of God, intend to remain.
- iii. Concerning ordinary members who actively promoted the Remonstrant cause and thus have given offense:
 1. There will be an amnesty concerning less weighty points.
 2. But those who have grieved the church with greater points will be required to make a confession of guilt before the consistory. The consistory will make a general announcement regarding this confession (without naming names) before the next celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- iv. Concerning members who were admitted by the Remonstrants, but wish to follow the Reformed:
 1. If someone of the Remonstrants repents and wishes to be admitted to communicant membership, he will not be denied. However, he must be visited by a minister and an elder and there must be an assurance that he will not spread Remonstrant beliefs among the other members.

2. The synod considered that, since such a submissive person's state and condition is unique, there should be a friendly meeting with him to discuss the various points of doctrine, and if he has withdrawn his opinion, he should make a public confession of guilt to avoid creating scandal. This would serve everyone's best interest.
3. Regarding those who come from the Remonstrants who were admitted by them to the Lord's Supper without a public profession of faith, they will be newly instructed in the main points of Christian doctrine and questioned and instructed as if they had never been church members.
4. If there are those who are admitted to the Lord's Supper, but fail to follow our doctrines and practices, the consistories shall punish them if they continue in this way. The consistories shall then consider further what to do with them.
- c. During the seventeenth century slackness developed, and by the eighteenth century this type of discipline was completely neglected.

III. What is the lesson for today from Scripture, the Confessions, and history?

- a. It is very necessary to watch for old and new doctrinal errors.¹⁰
- b. The members of the congregation and the consistory must cooperate in this.¹¹
- c. Doctrinal discipline is for individual members of the congregation who are holding to errors worthy of censure, not for societies, etc.¹²
- d. Consistories and broader assemblies may very well reflect on various spiritual influences which are penetrating the Reformed Churches and persuading members. For example:
 - i. Membership in organizations which stand on the foundation of a class struggle (i.e. labour unions).
 - ii. Membership in the Christian Democratic Union (a left-wing Dutch political party) or the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB).
- e. In all cases, doctrinal discipline must follow the principles of Scripture and the Confessions, and according to the rules developed in the Church Order.

¹⁰ Matt. 7:15, Matt. 24:5-6, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 9-10.

¹¹ Rom. 16:17-18, 1 Thess. 5:11, Gal. 6:1ff., James 5:19-20, Acts 20:28-31, Matt. 5:13-16, 2 Pet. 1:19, 2 Tim. 2:15, 1 John 4:1.

¹² Matt. 18:15, 1 Cor. 5:13, James 3:2. HC QAs 82 and 85, Church Order of Dort articles 71, 72, 73, 76 (= CanRC CO articles 66-68).